32 Via Romana 17 May 1909

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury. Monday.

My Betty.

No letter from you this morning. I hope you haven't come to the conclusion that my letters are so dull & miserable that you wish no longer to take the trouble to call them forth. But I may hear this evening. Meanwhile to console me, I have had a letter from Susan. She tells me that Sylvia, as a result of having her picture in the Line in the R. A. has been requested by the Sentimentalist to give her ideas on "The Evolution of Beauty":

We went up Loco to Berenson's yesterday afternoon. It was terribly hot & just as we got out of the train Clive saw a motor car containing a female whom he took to be Mrs B. going towards Florence. It looked as if she had gone out on purpose to avoid us. For we had told Geoffrey Scott that we should call on Sunday. But however we went on. Our condition was such from heat & dust & climb that we thought we should have even to face Mrs Ross for tea & shade if Mrs B. was out. But when we got there we found Mr Berenson & a strange female who soon went.

M: B. was very friendly & we stayed some time. He was accompanying him - Geoffrey Scott came in but no Mrs B. though just as we had left & were walking down the lane we saw her return in her motor. I don't know if she did so not to avoid us. but if so I think it rather absurd. Anyhow M: B. was very polite & said he would come & see us in London.

We spent this morning at Sta. Croce & are going there again this afternoon to see some of the many chapels you missed. Now that we have only 3 days left of course we are beginning to find out all the things we might & have seen. It has just got really hot. & last night the garden was dancing

with fireflies. I think you had better put some into Mel. They are most romantic insects.

We devote most of our conversation meals now to the two American females & their brothers. Whom we find on the whole much preferable to Miss Mussey. They are vast funds of information & amazingly sensible. The Signorina is so disgusting in her habits that she nearly makes me ill now that I have to sit next to her. Last night she returned again & again to the bones on her plate. till I could have pulled everything off the table to stop it. Then Romina mercifully took them away. I dislike Italians more & more.

I hope I shall hear from you tonight. It will be a great disappointment if I don't.

Yours VB.

T. PARSONS 3.2.73

82 Via Romana.

~~46, Gordon Square.~~

~~Bloomsbury.~~

May 18.

My Billy.

I had your letter last night & mine this morning. So I suppose that for some reason your letters have taken to coming at night. Why does Adrian think it absurd of us to write to each other every day? For all he knows our letters may be full of the most interesting abstract speculations & have nothing to do with prosaic details ~~but~~ I'm afraid you probably show him or read him mine.

which may be the reason of
his remarks. Your account
of the rows of Ritchies make
me thankful to be far from
them. We had an old en-
counter yesterday as we were
buying books. Who should appear
but Cole. Nothing maddens
them more. He was with Perkins.
He has been walking from Seven
Dials & seems to have had
innumerable rows upon the way.
He asked us to tea with him
at his hotel. So we went. &
found him in a gorgeous
suite of apartments. He sends
his courier on ahead with his
luggage to take his rooms while
he walks at his leisure. Perkins

did not know what to make of him. I thought him quite crazy but a good fellow really. He kept all the waiters in a state of terror & took a temple in Paris once which tempted me. He told us an amazing story of how he challenged Peter Rudd to a duel. He went to see him & found him painting his pictures to two strange ladies. Cole pulled out Peter's portrait of his mother & wanted to work at it. But Peter objected & said he could not see it. Cole insisted & appealed to the ladies who supported him. At last Peter got so enraged that he seized the portrait & flung it across the room & then sat down & burst into tears. The ladies fled in terror & Cole went. Afterwards he sent Peter a challenge to fight him in Battersea Park. To which Peter replied by a sarcastic refusal. Cole sent an insulting letter & so the matter ended. I don't know how much of it is to be believed. But

Cole works mad enough for anything. His eyes will more than they ever did. I can't think how he gets anywhere safely.

You say nothing of your last Thursday evening. Did anyone come? I had forgotten that you were going to the Versells this last Sunday. I am afraid it will interfere with my letter.

I don't see why you should raise Mandi ways for doing your hair else. For it is very little trouble & a pure saving when to be taught hair dressing. We have been to the Coffizzi in the morning & now it looks grey & inclined to rain. Regia put off my sitting this morning & don't know why. I have been considering how I shall paint you. It will be very beautiful & rather mysterious.

Yours VB.

? 19 May 1909

32 Via Romana.

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury. May

My Billy.
Can you imagine my horror-
rors-rors-rors! I, at it too
disgusting. Last night I woke
up ~~last night~~ with a sense
of acute irritation all over my
face. no doubt you know
it well. I scratched & it
got worse. At last I could
stand it no longer & spoke
to Clive who was awake too.
Then I got up & covered my
self with cold-cream - but
although I thought it nice at
first the idea seemed too

prepositerous. This morning however it is evident that it was a mp. for my bites are just the same as those we got in Greece. & Eric tells me he had one a few days ago. I am simply covered all over my face with them but & intensely irritating bites & am a pitiable object. But I hope they are now getting better. Still it is too loathesome. I have spoken severely to the Signora. Who is I think in tears for her reputation & has promised to change my mattresses & clean the room. I think I can write

some envy in your nice clean English hand. I had your letter written at the Ferrallo this morning but as you had only just got there you had not much to say. I don't wish to be unsympathetic about your wound. But you are rather a foolish little animal. I think to wear your teeth till the wound is quite healed. If the action of putting them in & taking them out again has this effect. If you let it get healed you will probably then be able to wear your teeth without damage. Anyhow you had better try this for it would be terrible if your beauty were to be seriously injured.

We meant to go to Pisa today. But after we had

night were too long to make an early start, so we went to see the frescos in the chapel at S.ta Maria Novella of an instead. I will bring you back some of your 1/4 chocolate. I had meant to do so anyhow. This may be the last letter I shall write to you. (Though perhaps I may write tomorrow for I suppose if I did you would get the letter on Saturday morning before we arrive. When shall I see you?) Clive had many papers from Wallenlamb yesterday. I wonder what you heard of him from Adrian. Madge sounds in a very odd state. I expect she will have a rest cure now. I don't believe it would take my maternal trials so hardly.

Yr VB.

(51)

32 Via Romana. 1909
(20 May

~~46, Gordon Square,~~
~~Bloomsbury.~~

Thursday.

My Billy.

I had a long letter from you last night written after you return from the Verralls, where you seem to have had rather a dull time. Evidently you did not get much more out of Helen than I did. You will be glad to hear that we passed a peaceful night last night & that my bites are improving. (Tough I cannot yet be said to be beautiful.

But what between petroleum
with which the floor was
covered & turpentine with which
I soaked my nightgown &
pillows I felt fairly safe. Still
I am glad that we only have
one more night here. We
have been this morning to the
church of the Badia & to the
Riccardi chapel. both of which
you missed. This evening I
shall call on Regia to say
good-bye. She has behaved rather
oddly. for I had arranged to
paint her one morning. but
she sent a card the evening

before saying she had to go out but not explaining why. Since then I have heard nothing. She always that we go tomorrow so it is a little odd. I think relations with these relations altogether are rather difficult. & not very satisfactory. There is a pretence of great intimacy, but it is unreal & not very successful. I always feel afraid that they may think they have to ask us to things - not that they have done so - but then I reflect that after all they were probably a good deal more of an encumbrance when they all planted themselves on us in the New Forest & in London. I am inclined to think that Regia does not approve of us having dropped

peace. I suppose for another letter from you tonight - the last. It is fairly exciting to be coming back again. I feel as if I had been away for about 6 months. I am beginning into plans for what I want to paint this summer - you among other things. I think perhaps in either your rose or your grey evening dress. Think how you will have me at your mercy in the way of petting. if you do it. & at last perhaps I shall do you more or less justice. You don't deserve this letter for you had me from Clive as well as from me yesterday. Tell the Guiges I am coming & make them perfume themselves. Yours VB.

8 Aug 1909

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

Sunday.

My Billy.

I have had no news of you yet beyond Saxmundham post-card. On the other hand I have not yet sent you more than a card. But I seem to have been rather busy since you went, what with going to Tisdall & Hemp. Im Court. It was very melancholy leaving you on Sunday night – at least I felt it like so. But perhaps you didn't. We went to Hampton Court to console ourselves – & I

we came to any definite conclusion – but others seem your letters, I must – thus from to-day unless you say I can. I was so appalled by the dullness of mine old letters & must read this that I hardly dare send it.

VB.

8 Aug 1909

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.
Sunday.

My Billy-
I have had no news of
you yet beyond Jack's post-
card - Do the Max's know I
have not yet sent them
anything from here? I have
been busy since you went, what
with prep & Tidall & Hemp.
In Court - It was very
melancholy leaving you
Feeling
on Tuesday night - as
least - I felt it like so -
but perhaps you didn't.
We came to Keswick (not
say the name) & went
your letters - & I

VB.

to any definite conclusion about Clive's seeing
I would have written to him unless you
told me to. I hardly dare
read the
letters of mine
that I read the
other day that
I wrote

have never smelt such delicious smells. As I think I told you we talked of quantum theory as often do - we did last night too - that is more you can't be certain to know what we said. I will only say that the word "genius" did actually occur in the conversation more than once, but that is not saying much. It is very late here & I was too lazy yesterday to do more than sketch in my rude mathematical perspectivity - talking of

made men. Lytton seems, from the accounts of the state of Sweden, to be in rather a predicament - I suppose he has no letters or light & it seems even doubtful whether he can be getting food or attendance - unless in rest cures they engage to be prepared for strikes. It is an unlucky moment to have chosen for going there. Sophy appeared yesterday, with two letters for you, as she did not know your address. One was really a card - from Katharine, saying that if you were in London she would send you your legacy. She is coming to sit

tomorrow, so I will tell you that you are not, & give her your address. The other I took the liberty of opening. It was a note from Bruce Richmond only saying that he did want the Bayreuth article by the 19th, nothing else so I don't send it on. I heard from Sylvia Milmar of what sound charming lodgings at Studland Bay, near Poole Harbour. She says there is a large beach & it is quite a small place. She knows of good lodgings which I have written to. It sounds very much what we want. The country is lovely. I have also had a letter from Olive who seems to want news. She is leaving Cambridge for Yorkshire. She found Paris charming but chilling. I hope for a letter from you tomorrow. As I don't think

T. PARSONS 3.2.72